

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8158

INFO US MISSION GENEVA 284

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GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR SHERER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, APER, CZ

SUBJECT: CONGEN BRATISLAVA

1. DURING CALL BY CHARGE' MAY 27, ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPARTMENT MFA) WAS AT HIS MOST POSITIVE, SPEAKING OF ROCKEFELLER VISIT AND OTHER MATTERS (SEPTTEL) IN VERY UPBEAT WAY. CHARGE' TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS WARMTH BY BRINGING UP QUESTION OF OPENING OF CONGEN BRATISLAVA. (THIS HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED WITH AMBASSADOR SHERER, WHO GAVE APPROVAL TO RAISING THE MATTER GENTLY IF A GOOD OCCASION AROSE. SINCE ZANTOVSKY HAD MENTIONED AMBASSADOR SPACIL'S FAREWELL CALLS IN WASHINGTON, CHARGE' TOOK THE DISCUSSION OF BRATISLAVA THEREIN AS JUMPOFF POINT.)

2. CHARGE' EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE NEAR POINT OF NO RETURN FOR THREE GOOD OFFICERS WHO HAD STUDIED SLOVAK FOR A YEAR AND WERE SOON (PERHAPS ALREADY) OFF ON OTHER ASSIGNMENTS. ON THEIR BEHALF, THEREFORE, AND IN FULL COGNIZANCE OF REASONS FOR GOC POSITION, WE WISHED TO KNOW ZANTOVSKY'S OPINION AS TO HOW LONG WE MIGHT EXPECT THE PRESENT GOC POSITION TO OBTAIN.

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3. ZANTOVSKY REPLIED IN MODERATE AND REASONABLE TERMS THAT GOC WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO MOVE ON THIS QUESTION, BOTH IN GENERAL INTERESTS OF US-CSSR RELATIONS AND ALSO BECAUSE GOC FELT IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL TO HAVE CONGEN OPEN IN CHICAGO. HOWEVER, THE COLLAPSE OF THE CLAIMS AGREEMENT WAS SERIOUS, AS US SIDE UNDERSTOOD.

4. ZANTOVSKY THEN SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION, SINCE IT WAS ASKED, US SIDE WAS NOT BEING INVENTIVE ENOUGH IN COMING FORWARD WITH IDEAS. HE SAID DURING THE UPSWING PERIOD, A WHOLE LIST OF IDEAS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED FOR IMPROVING US-CSSR RELATIONS. NOW NOTHING WAS BEING DONE. THE US LIKED TO FORM TASK FORCES; HE WOULD BET THAT IF TASK FORCE WERE FORMED ON US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, IT COULD COME UP WITH SOME WORKABLE IDEAS. BARRING THIS, HOWEVER, IN ALL REALISM, HE DID NOT SEE HOW PROGRESS COULD BE EXPECTED IN VERY NEAR FUTURE.

5. COMMENT: AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, GOC HAS REFRAINED THROUGHOUT FROM EXPLICIT LINKAGE OF BRATISLAVE CONGEN WITH CLAIMS AGREEMENT; LINKAGE HAS BEEN ONLY TO GENERAL BILATERAL SITUATION. IT SEEMED TO US THAT ZANTOVSKY WAS SAYING THAT IF US SIDE CAME FORWARD WITH SOME OTHER PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING BILATERAL RELATIONS, GOC WOULD POSSIBLY BE WILLING TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT BRATISLAVA SITUATION. (ZANTOVSKY'S EMPHASIS ON CZECHOSLOVAK "FLEXIBILITY" -- A WORD HE USED -- AND ON RECEPTIVITY TO NEW US IDEAS MAY REPRESENT SOME LOOSENING OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK POSITION AS PUT TO US LAST JANUARY, BUT WE WOULD NOT WANT TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THIS ONE CONVERSATION.) PROBABLY IT IS TOO LATE IN ANY EVENT TO SALVAGE OUR THREE SLOVAK-SPEAKERS BEFORE THEY GO OFF TO OTHER VINEYARDS. NEVERTHELESS, WE WERE WELL IMPRESSED BY THE RATHER FLEXIBLE VIEW ZANTOSKY EXPRESSED ON THE QUESTION.
PERRY

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